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Agenda item 71

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Carlos D. **Sorreta** (Philippines)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" was included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 53/70 of 4 December 1998.

2. At its 3rd meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 23 September 1999, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 64, 65 and 67 to 85, which was held at the 3rd to 12th meetings, from 11 to 15 and from 18 to 20 October (see A/C.1/54/PV.3-12). Thematic discussions on the items were held, and draft resolutions were introduced and considered, on 21 and 22 and from 25 to 29 October (see A/C.1/54/PV.13-19). Action on all draft resolutions was taken at the 20th to 27th meetings, on 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9 November (see A/C.1/54/PV.20-27).

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/213);

(b) Letter dated 15 October 1999 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the communiqué of the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 23 September 1999 (A/54/469-S/1999/1063).

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II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.4

5. At the 16th meeting, on 26 October, the representative of the Russian Federation introduced a draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" (A/C.1/54/L.4). Subsequently, Guyana joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At its 22nd meeting, on 2 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.4 without a vote (see para. 7).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/70 of 4 December 1998,

Recalling also its resolutions on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, in which, *inter alia*, it recognized that scientific and technological developments could have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needed to be maintained and encouraged,

Noting that considerable progress has been achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and means of telecommunication,

Affirming that it sees in this process the broadest positive opportunities for the further development of civilization, the expansion of opportunities for cooperation for the common good of all States, the enhancement of the creative potential of mankind and additional improvements in the circulation of information in the global community,

Recalling in this connection the approaches and principles outlined at the Information Society and Development Conference, held at Midrand, South Africa, from 13 to 15 May 1996,

Taking note of the results of the Ministerial Conference on Terrorism, held in Paris on 30 July 1996, and of the recommendations it made,[1]

Noting that the dissemination and use of information technologies and means affect the interests of the entire international community and that optimum effectiveness is enhanced by broad international cooperation,

Expressing concern that these technologies and means can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the security of States in both civilian and military fields,

Considering that it is necessary to prevent the misuse or exploitation of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes,

[1] See A/51/261, annex.

Noting the contribution of those Member States that have presented their assessments on issues of information security to the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 3 of resolution 53/70,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General containing those assessments,[2]

Welcoming the timely initiative taken by the Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in convening an international meeting of experts at Geneva in August 1999 on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security,

Considering that the assessments of Member States contained in the report of the Secretary-General and the international meeting of experts have contributed to a better understanding of the substance of issues of international information security, related notions and possible measures to limit the threats emerging in this field,

1. *Calls upon* Member States to further promote at multilateral levels the consideration of existing and potential threats in the field of information security;

2. *Invites* all Member States to continue to inform the Secretary-General of their views and assessments on the following questions:

(a) General appreciation of the issues of information security;

(b) Definition of basic notions related to information security, including unauthorized interference with or misuse of information and telecommunications systems and information resources;

(c) Advisability of developing international principles that would enhance the security of global information and telecommunications systems and help to combat information terrorism and criminality;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

4. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session the item entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security".

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[2] See A/54/213.